

Annual Report

AS TO THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS

For the Year 1910.

BY

H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.



DISS :

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE

DISS URBAN COUNCIL.

I herewith have the honour to present my **SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT** as your Medical Officer of Health.

1.--District.

(a) PHYSICAL FEATURES.

(b) GEOLOGICAL FEATURES.

These remain the same, and as they were given in detail in my Report of 1909 I shall not refer to them here.

2.—Chief Occupation of your Inhabitants.

This also has not changed since last year.

3.—House Accommodation.

For the 3,800 of your population, there are some 961 houses, 621 of which you might call cottages whose rent is below £8 per annum,

The four new cottages in the course of construction in Mount Street Road are now finished and occupied, as are also the two new villas in the Walcot Road. There are also two new cottages and one villa erected and occupied on Cemetery Road, all within the past year. This shows that there is a need for a certain class of house in the town.

The plans for the new houses were duly passed by the Council, and all have been connected to the public sewer.

I am glad to say your Council have seen their way to agree to my suggestion of having the yards and entries of certain properties paved. I regret not being able to report this as an accomplished fact, but this was due more to the inclement weather than anything else.

4.—Sewerage.

You are in possession of a most excellent system of water borne sewerage which connects up the whole of the town with the exception of the east end, and the country to the north. With reference to the former of these, I think this might be attended to later when you have your new water scheme working.

My suggestion of having a proper plan of the town sewerage system drawn up is now almost complete, and I have no doubt will prove useful in years to come.

5.—Rainfall, &c.

I have alluded already to the inclemency of the weather during the past year, and although a fine or dry year was due to us we seemed to have rain, rain every day. Still we are to be congratulated in that it might have been worse, our total fall being 27.54 inches, which is not nearly so much above the average as it was in 90 per cent. of the other recording stations in Great Britain, *e.g.*, round the Bristol Channel it was 30 per cent. in excess of the average.

The rain seems quite to have forgotten how to behave itself, for as in 1909 there were more wet days than nights.

DETAILS OF THE RAINFALL AS MEASURED IN MY GARDEN.

Rain Gauge	{	Pattern known as "Snowdon."
		Height of top above ground—8 inches.
		" " " " sea level—108·9 feet.
		Time of observation 9 a.m.

Total Rainfall 27·54 inches.

Rain fell on 177 days.

The most in one day 1·23 on December 1st.

" " " " week 2·31 November 29th—December 4th.

" " " " month 3·79 in December.

Note.—August 4th and 5th..... 2·08 inches.

	RAINFALL IN INCHES.	WET DAYS.
January	2·27	19
February	1·53	22
March	·81	10
April	2·14	14
May	3·10	17
June	1·78	11
July	3·26	14
August	3·61	16
September	1·00	9
October.....	1·09	10
November	3·06	15
December.....	3·79	20
	27·54	177

BAROMETER.—DISS, 1909.

Highest January 7	{	 30·50.
March 29		
" 31		

Lowest January 24th 28·40.

Mean 29·89.

THERMOMETER.

Maximum June 9th 80·5 degrees.

Minimum January 26th 20. degrees.

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1910 and previous Years.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	NETT DEATHS AT ALL AGES BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT	
		Number.	Rate.*	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.					Number	Rate.*
				Number	Rate per 1,000 Births registered.	Number.	Rate.*					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1904	3,760	75	19.9	14	186	42	11.1	4	4	...	46	12.1
1905	3,770	57	16.1	10	175	37	9.8	4	2	1	42	11.7
1906	3,800	78	20.5	4	51.2	43	11.3	3	2	...	41	10.7
1907	3,800	56	14.7	2	36.7	44	8.1	5	1	...	43	11.3
1908	3,800	82	21.5	3	36.5	42	11	3	1	...	41	10.7
1909	3,800	56	14.7	5	89.2	54	14.2	1	1	...	52	13.6
Averages for years 1904-1909	3,793	62.65	17.6	5.8	93.14	47.8	12.2	2.4	1.5	...	47.3	12.3
1910	3,800	88	23.1	5	56.8	42	.11	3	2	...	40	10.5

*Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

Total Population at all ages, 3,800.

Number of Inhabited Houses, 961. Average number of persons per house, 4.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water), 3,625.

There is one institution within the District receiving sick and infirm persons from outside the District, viz., the Hospital, Diss.

6.—Zymotic Diseases.

DISEASE.	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	Average 22.2
Scarlet Fever	3	1	1	4	48	12	26	
Diphtheria	...	...	1	...	14	5	16	
Erysipelas	4	2	1	2	5	3	2	
Enteric or Typhoid Fever	...	1	9	4	...	2	...	
	7	4	12	10	67	22	44	

In spite of my almost boasting remarks of last year, I am again able to show a clean sheet as regards the notification of Zymotic Diseases this year.

TABLE III.

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the Year 1910.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.					
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.				
		1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 up.
Erysipelas	4	...	...	...	3	1
Scarlet Fever	3	...	3	...	...	...
Totals	7	...	3	...	3	1

In spite of the closure of both schools from a pretty severe epidemic of Duns Disease, the

7.—Zymotic Mortality

was Nil.

8.—Deaths (*See* TABLE IV.)

TABLE IV.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1910.

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the District.						
	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and up- wards.
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	3	...	...	...	...	3	...
Other tuberculous diseases ...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Cancer, malignant disease ...	4	...	...	...	...	2	2
Bronchitis	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pneumonia	3	...	...	1	...	2	...
Alcoholism	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Cirrhosis of liver }	3	3	...	...	...	...	...
Premature Birth	7	...	...	...	...	2	5
Heart diseases	4	...	...	1	...	3	...
Accidents	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Suicides	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Cerebral Hemorrhage ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Anæmia	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Rickets	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Acute yellow atrophy of liver	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Old age	10	...	...	...	...	...	10
All causes	42	5	2	3	1	14	17

This Table shows 12 less than last year. "Senectus" or Old Age again as in former years accounts for the majority. This year the figure is 10.

Cancer, I am glad to see, only accounts for 4.

The 14 deaths in Column 7, between the ages 25—65, at the request of your Council I sub-divide up as follow :

Ages.....25—40	41—60	61—65
Number ... 4	6	4

The Rate is 11 per 1000 of the population and the corrected rate is 10.5, which is very low indeed, being well under the average and much better than towns of this size can show. Of the total deaths 24 were males and 18 were females.

TABLE V.

*Infantile Mortality during the Year 1910.***DEATHS FROM STATED CAUSES IN WEEKS AND MONTHS
UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.**

URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	Total under One Month.	Total Deaths under One Year.
(iii.) <i>Wasting Diseases:</i> Premature Birth. ...	2	1	...	3	3
(v.) <i>Other Causes:</i> Bronchitis ...	1	...	...	1	1
Other causes ...	...	...	1	1	1
	3	1	1	5	5

Urban District of Diss. Population estimated to middle of 1910, 3,800.

Births in the year—legitimate 85, illegitimate 3.

Deaths in the year—legitimate infants 5, illegitimate 0.

Deaths from all Causes at all Ages, 42.

9.—Infantile Mortality.

Meaning the Deaths from all causes under the age of 12 months.

The total number is 5, the same as last year; but as our birth rate is considerably higher the rate is much lower, viz., 56.8, as compared with 89.2. Again, as 3 of the 5 deaths were due to premature births and not to disease, I look upon this as a very excellent return.

10.—Births.

Just as 1909 was the lowest rate I have ever returned, so in compensation was last year the highest.

There were in all 88 births, the sexes being equally divided. Of this grand total only 3 were illegitimate.

11.—Excrement Disposal.

Most of the new houses have been connected to the main sewers ; and as I reported in 1909, nothing further can be done in the matter till the town has a water supply.

12.—Water Supply.

Though I am unable to say you have got a water supply, I am happy to say we are considerably nearer the point than we were when last I made my report. Your engineer has made his trial bore on his original site near the Shelfanger Road. Further, he has carried out a trial pumping lasting 14 days and nights, during which time some 2 281,440 gallons of water were thrown up, and paradoxical as it may seem the water came faster at the end of the trial than it did at the beginning.

Five minutes after this long test had ceased the water rose to its original height in the bore, and during the whole of the test the water in the neighbouring wells was in no way affected.

Samples of this water were taken at various times during the trial.

These were analysed by your M.O.H. and various public analysts.

The consensus of opinion was that the water, though hard and containing rather a large amount of salt (Na. Cl.), was in every way an excellent one for a public supply.

Your engineer's report is about to be presented to the L.G.B., when I hope everything will be on a fair way to realising what has been a long felt want.

RESULT OF ANALYSIS OF WATER FROM TRIAL BORE AT DISS.

N.B.—These Samples were taken at different times, hence the slightly different figures.

Samples examined by	Your M.O.H.	F. Sutton.	Beeby Thompson.
1. Colour	Clear, Sparkling.		Clear, Sparkling.
2. Turbidity	Nil.	Slightly Opalescent.	Minute Sediment after standing some days.
3. Odour	Nil.		Odourless.
4. Reaction	Nil.		
5. Residue left on Evaporation	Clear White Chalk. (?) Magnesia. Does not char on heating.		
6. Ammonia	Trace.	Free—·064. Albumenoid—trace.	Free—·346. Albumenoid—·03.
7. Chlorine	6 grains per gallon.	6·3 gr. per gallon.	6·5.
8. Equivalent of Common Salt	10·88 gr. per gallon.	14·83 gr. per gallon.	
9. Nitrites	Nil.	o.	
10. Nitrates	Nil.	o.	
11. Hardness... ..	9 degrees.	Before boiling—50 8. After „ —14·57.	As Calcium Carbonate—44·8 gr. per gallon.
12. Lead, Iron, Zinc	Iron.	Iron a trace.	
13. Oxygen absorbed in 15 mins. at 212 degrees F.	·05 gr. per gallon.	In 4 hours—·028. at 80 degrees F.	In 4 hours—·57. at 80 degrees F.
Notes Vide Infra.	3	2	1

Note 1.....“The hardness is great and the amount of free ammonia and chlorine large. The character of the dissolved matter, however, and the history of the water as indicated in the account of the boring *do not point to the chlorine being due to pollution.*”

F. C. THOMPSON, F.C.S., F.G.S.,
Northampton.

Note 2.--“ *This water is devoid of organic matter and is free from pollution by sewerage or surface impurities. The chlorides are high, the total solid matter is high, and it is very hard.*”

F. SUTTON, F.I.C., F.C.S.,

Public Analyst for the County of Norfolk.

Note 3.—I see by my notes that I examined a specimen of the water from the trial bore at the end of the 14 days' pumping. My analysis shows that it was slightly softer than that found by the other examinations. We have it on the authority of our engineer that the water he has tapped is a virgin well, where the water has been lying in the chalk, under great pressure, for an unknown length of time, and it stands to reason this being so that the various salts in it must be in a concentrated and super-saturated condition. This will obviously improve in time, when the pumping has caused a flow to take place; the water will be much softer and contain a very much smaller quantity of chlorine.

Finally, noticing the points in the above reports which I have italicised, I should say that the water we have got will in every way prove a suitable one, and it is a moot point as to whether a better could be got in this neighbourhood.

13.—Supervised Premises.

DAIRIES AND SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Your Inspector and I have made some 50 odd visits of inspection (*vide Form 752*).

The lack of revised Bye-Laws makes this work rather difficult, from want of data to work on. This I hope will soon be remedied as your Council has formed a Committee with this object in view.

14.—House Town Planning Act, 1909.

There has, as yet, no specific action been taken under this Act. Your Council has formed a further Committee to consider the amendment and addition to its Bye-Laws, and will soon be taking action under this heading.

It will be a heavy weapon to wield in an old-fashioned town like this, and great responsibility will rest on the officers appointed to do the work. It must be remembered that the majority of the houses are centuries old, and that to make any sweeping changes would be more than the town can stand.

I would strongly urge your Council to start at once with the naming of the streets and numbering of the houses therein. For in the event of any action being taken it would be difficult to tell—for example, which was No. 1, Mount Street.

15.—Schools.

There are still the same Public Schools as were described in my Report of 1909, with the addition of the Secondary School on Shelfanger Road. This now has some 100 scholars drawn from the surrounding country.

I have received some 59 reports from the teachers of the above schools during the past year, and action has been taken in them all.

It was found necessary to close the Schools in June owing to an epidemic of Duns Disease.

This began to show itself by children being absent from school for one or more days with sore throat and returning to school later. Many of the cases were never absent at all, and in only a few could desquamation be made out. The attendance fell to such an extent that I called in my colleague, the County M.O.H., who made the above diagnosis; with the result that first the Council and then the National Schools were closed.

Later in the year the Infant Department of the Council School was again closed due to an epidemic of Chicken Pox and Mumps, but this was of short duration and did not spread much. Diss Council Schools were closed from 21st June to 13th July, and the Infants' Department again from 12th October to 31st October. Diss National School was closed from 23rd June to 18th July. It is interesting to note here that in spite of the above I had only three cases of true Scarlet Fever notified to me during the year, and they were all from one house.

The usual methods of disinfecting the Schools were carried out before they were re-opened.

The méthode of dealing with the above cases is such as was reported in 1909.

I reported last year "that the sooner the County Council see their way to do away with the Attendance prizes which are at present given, the better.

"Children are so eager to get these prizes, and they know that no medical certificate will be accepted as an excuse for not being there, that they will drag themselves to school in all stages of infectious diseases, and all I can say is that it will become an annual affair to close the schools for every small outbreak of any Zymotic disease till this point is rectified."

I note that the Medical Officer of Health of York writes as follows :—

"THE ABUSE OF ATTENDANCE PRIZES.

"In his report on the inspection of York school children, Dr. Edmund M. Smith, M.O.H., notes that the abandonment of prizes for continuous school attendance in the city elementary schools is a matter of gratification, because of the dangers which those prizes induce in secreting cases of infectious disease, and in sending children in a suspicious condition to school. He writes: 'In these cases the parents are more to blame than the children, for they are so anxious that the coveted first-prize ('never absent, never late') should be obtained, that they will send children to school who, even on casual inspection, are seen to be ill enough to be in bed. The work of the teachers is also made more difficult, and, if the child has a sore throat, they hesitate to send it home at once, if by so doing a 'special' prize would be lost. Dr. Smith adds that school prizes in elementary schools should never be given for attendance but for good *conduct and efficiency*.'"

16.—Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act, 1907.

It has not been necessary to seize any unsound food under this Act during the past year.

Under this heading I may state that the present campaign in favour of the "Standard Bread" has my whole approval.

I have also received during the year a copy of the Report of the "National Food Enquiry Bureau." This Enquiry, as announced in connection with the work of investigation, was "undertaken to establish, on widely based statistical foundations, the economy and the diatetic advantages of Oat-foods for all classes. The proper feeding of its citizens is the concern of the Nation,"

While your Council is revising its Bye-laws, I might suggest one making it punishable to feed infants under 7 months of age on "Bread-sop."

In conclusion I have to thank my colleague, Mr. Cooper, for his valuable assistance to me in the year's work; Mr. Taylor, for the Barometer readings, Mr. Pullen for kindly lending me his notes on the Rainfall, and you, Gentlemen, once more, for your unvarying courtesy to me in the past year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

H. M. SPEIRS, M.D.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1910,

FOR THE URBAN DISTRICT OF DISS,
on the administration of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, in
connection with

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, WORKPLACES AND HOMEWORK.

1. *Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.*

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances

Premises.	Number of Inspections.
Factories (including Factory Laundries) ... }	33
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries) ... }	
Total... ..	33

2.—*Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.*

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found.	Remedied.
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—		
Want of drainage of floors	1	1
Sanitary accommodation unsuitable or defective	6	6
Total	7	7

3.—*Home Work.*

Nature of Work.	Lists received from Employers.	
	Lists.	Workmen.
Wearing Apparel—Making, &c.	1	1

4.—Registered Workshops.

Workshops on the Register (s. 131) at the end of the year.	Number.
	43
Total number of Workshops on Register	43

5.—Other Matters.

Class.	Number.
Underground Bakehouses (s. 101) :— In use at the end of the year (with Council's permission) ...	1